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ACCESSIONS

GRECO-ROMAN POTTERY

The accession by purchase, with funds appropriated by the city for such purposes, of four Greco-Roman terra cotta vases of the III Century B. C. marks an important addition to the classical department of the Institute. The vases were originally in the collection of Signor Raoul Tolentino, Roman expert antiquarian, at the sale of whose collection they passed into the hands of the dealer from whom they were purchased by the Arts Commission.

The work of excavating ancient tombs and sites of old cities not only in Greece but in the Greek colonies in Italy, chiefly in the southern part or what was known as Magna Graecia, has revealed the great wealth of examples of the potter's art which have made that phase of Greek art so famous. The four vases are representative of the later work done in the Greek colonies under the influence of Greek workmen, if not actually made by them. The place at which they were excavated, Canosa or ancient Canusium, in Apulia, was the center for the manufacture of large terra cotta pieces.

One of the two smaller vases, and in many respects the most interesting, stands thirty-two inches high and has a spherical body with one rather large flaring lipped mouth, behind which a broad flat handle passes over the top of the body.

Standing on the handle and surmounting a rectangular projection on either side are female figures in the round, the two on the right with arms upraised, and the other with the left arm outstretched. On the front and back of the vase are appliqué masks with a small figure standing above the larger one in front, which is also flanked by the fore parts of galloping horses.

The other small vase is also more or less spherical in shape, but it has four mouths, a large one in the center front with three smaller ones directly behind it. The latter are covered in, however, and on them are placed draped female figures with wings, probably intended to represent victories, or figures of the goddess of victory. The appliqué mask on the front of this vase represents Medusa with her snaky locks. The vase has no handle, unless the small opening made by connecting the larger front mouth with the one directly behind it may be considered one.

The other two vases take the form of a pair of large jugs with bulbous bodies tapering above into long slender necks with trefoil shaped lips and below into broad feet, and with very high curved handles. They are thirty-five inches in height. The decoration consists of tiny heads at the intersections of the handle with the body and lip, and of three modeled figures around



GRECO-ROMAN TERRA COTTA VASES
III CENTURY B. C.
PURCHASED FROM CITY APPROPRIATION.

the center of the body—on one the figures of a man, a wild boar and a kind of goat, and on the other the figure of a triton or sea monster with the animals on either side.

The terra cotta or unbaked clay of which the vases were made was covered with a white slip or paste and then sometimes painted either in the folds of the draperies of the figures, the eyes and lips of the masks, or with decorative bands. The white slip, however, has chipped off as it has dried and only a few

traces of the color on these vases is left, a delicate rose pink in bands around the neck of one of the jugs, on the trefoil shaped lip of the same, in the folds of the draperies, and on the wings of the victories.

Vases which differ from the two smaller ones only in a few details are in the collections of the British Museum and the Louvre. These large vases do not seem to have been used for any practical purpose and were probably made for sepulchral use only.
C. R. C.

